

VZCZCXRO1348  
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSL  
DE RUEHMO #2747 3101436  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 061436Z NOV 09  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5331  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHXD/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

S E C R E T MOSCOW 002747

SIPDIS  
NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/05/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PL](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIA: POLISH PM SIKORSKI REOPENS OLD FIGHTS

REF: A. MOSCOW 1397  
[1](#)B. MOSCOW 2240  
[1](#)C. MOSCOW 642  
[1](#)D. WARSAW 1122

Classified By: Political MC Susan M. Elliott for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Russian media and officials are concerned with Polish FM Radoslaw Sikorski's November 4 comments to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. In particular, they noted Sikorski's request for U.S. forces on the ground in Poland to "protect against Russian aggression" and his characterization that the recent "Zapad-2009" exercises were directed against Poland. Some Russian officials were quick to point out that Sikorski's comments undermined not only improved Polish relations (Ref A and B), but harmed Russian-U.S. and Russian-NATO relations as well.

[1](#)2. (SBU) While the Russian MFA has not yet issued a formal statement, FM Sergey Lavrov told the press that he did not believe that Sikorski had actually made the remarks. Lavrov commented, however, that if proved true, "it throws me into deep astonishment because we had talked in a detailed manner about the problems that needed to be addressed in the context of European security." Russian Permanent Representative to NATO Dmitry Rogozin called Sikorski's remarks "absurd" and a u-turn in Polish policy toward Russia and its engagement with NATO and Europe. Duma International Relations Committee Chair Konstantin Kosachev told the press that Sikorski's statements "directly contradicted" the improvement in Russia-U.S. and Russia-NATO relations.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Unfortunately, the Polish government had seeded some of this Russian response through their sponsorship of and statements in support of the EU's Eastern Partnership Initiative (Ref C) and show of support to Georgia during the 2008 Russia-Georgia War. Further, the Polish MFA has established a Bureau of European Security, which Polish diplomats jokingly refer to as the "Office of Threats from the East." According to XXXXXXXXXXXX diplomat XXXXXXXXXXXX (PROTECT), who was recruited to work in this bureau while serving in Moscow, the Russian MFA threw this new moniker back at him during a meeting. XXXXXXXXXXXX claimed to us that the only way the MFA could have known about the reference was to have been listening in on his phone conversations with Warsaw while he was interviewing for the job.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: The GOR will take some time to digest Sikorski's comments, and evaluate whether or not to alter the current positive trend in bilateral relations. Russia has many levers, including delaying the approval of a pending gas deal (Ref D). Sikorski has given anti-western elements in Russia ammunition against improved Russian relations with NATO and even with the U.S.  
Beyrle